

**Amendments to the Claims:**

Please cancel claims 5, 6, and 27 without prejudice or disclaimer. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method of scoring risk associated with cashing a check, the method comprising:

receiving information about a check written by a first party and presented to an entity for cashing by a second party other than the first party check writing entity;

accessing stored positive pay information about issued checks wherein said positive pay information indicates whether a check issuer is willing to honor the presented check so as to reimburse an entity who has provided cash in return for accepting the check;

assigning a positive pay category based on a comparison of the stored positive pay information and the received information about the check; ~~and~~

determining a positive pay risk score associated with cashing the presented check based at least in part on the assigned positive pay category[.];

determining a transaction risk score based on the positive pay risk score and at least one other risk score based on additional information associated with cashing the presented check, wherein determining the transaction risk score comprises combining the positive pay risk score with the at least one other risk score; and

determining based on the transaction risk score whether to authorize payment of the check.

2. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein receiving information about the presented check comprises receiving at least one of the set consisting of: bank number,

account number, check number, check issue date, check amount, payee identifier, and payor identifier.

3. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein receiving information about the presented check comprises receiving information obtained from a magnetic ink character recognition (MICR) line on the check.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the positive pay risk score corresponds to a graduated level of confidence that the check will be honored by the check issuer.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim [[6]] 1, wherein ~~determining the transaction risk score based at least in part on~~ the additional information comprises ~~determining the transaction risk score based at least in part on~~ at least one of the set consisting of: additional information about the check, information about a check presenter associated with the check, and information about an entity to which the check is presented for cashing.

8. (Currently Amended) A computerized method for determining whether to authorize payment of a second-party check presented to an entity for processing, the method comprising:

obtaining with a point of sale device installed in an entity location data comprising at least one of: an account identifier, a check number, a check issue date, and an amount associated with a second-party check presented for processing;

transmitting the data to a check authorization system;

identifying at the check authorization system which of a plurality of positive pay databases is associated with the second-party check;

accessing the identified positive pay database associated with the second-party check and comparing the transmitted data and information stored in the positive pay database;  
assigning a positive pay category based on comparing the transmitted data and the information stored in the positive pay database;  
determining a positive pay risk score associated with accepting the second-party check from a processor of the check and providing valuable consideration to the possessor in return for the second-party check based at least in part on the comparison and further based upon the positive pay category;  
determining a transaction risk score based on the positive pay risk score and at least one other risk score based on additional information associated with cashing the check, wherein determining the transaction risk score comprises combining the positive pay risk score with the at least one other risk score; and  
determining based at least in part on the transaction risk score whether to authorize payment of the second-party check; and  
transmitting a recommendation indicative of the authorization determination to the entity.

9. (Currently Amended) The computerized method of Claim 8, further comprising: obtaining with the point of sale device information about a payee of the second-party check; and

transmitting the payee information to the check authorization system, wherein the additional information associated with cashing the check comprises the information about the payee.

10. (Original) The computerized method of Claim 8, wherein determining whether to authorize payment of the second-party check comprises determining whether to guarantee the second-party check.

11. (Original) The computerized method of Claim 8, wherein determining whether to authorize payment of the second-party check further comprises determining whether to purchase the second-party check from the entity.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) An apparatus that scores risk associated with accepting a check, the apparatus comprising:

a database that stores positive pay information about checks issued by check writers to payees wherein said positive pay information indicates issued checks that check writers are willing to honor;

a computer processor configured to receive input about a check presented to an entity by a check presenter claiming to be a payee, the computer processor further configured to use the input to access positive pay information from the database that is associated with the payor of the check and assign a positive pay category based on a comparison of the positive pay information from the database and the received input about the check, the computer processor further configured to determine a positive pay risk score associated with accepting the check, determine a transaction risk score based on the positive pay risk score and at least one other risk score based on additional information associated with cashing the presented check, wherein determining the transaction risk score comprises combining the positive pay risk score with the at least one other risk score, determine based on the transaction risk score whether to authorize payment of the check, and providing cash to the payee in return for accepting the check based at least in part on the ~~positive pay category~~ authorizing payment of the check.

14. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein the database further stores information about issued checks that check writers are not willing to honor.

15. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein the computer processor is located at a check authorization system and the database is located at a financial entity external to the check authorization system.

16. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein the computer processor is located at a check authorization system and the database is located at the check authorization system.

17.-26. (Canceled)

27. (Canceled)

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the positive pay category is selected from a group consisting of: "match"; "no match"; "item paid"; "item stopped"; "item voided"; and "data unavailable".

Please add the following new claims:

29. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one other risk score comprises a risk score based on biometric information for a check presenter, a risk score based on location information for the first party and the second party, and a risk score based on insignia-related information from the check.

30. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein the plurality of databases comprise at least one database internal to the check authorization system and one database external to the check authorization system.